



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
District of New Hampshire*

*Federal Building
55 Pleasant Street, Room 352
Concord, New Hampshire 03301*

603/225-1552

MEDIA RELEASE
For Immediate Release
December 20, 2004

Thomas P. Colantuono
United States Attorney

Contact: Joseph N. Laplante
Assistant U.S. Attorney
(603) 225-1562 x 230

NEW ENGLAND ORGANIZED CRIME
DRUG ENFORCEMENT TASK FORCE ("OCDETF")

**NUMEROUS LAKES REGION AND MASSACHUSETTS DEFENDANTS
SENTENCED FOR FEDERAL DRUG TRAFFICKING AND WEAPONS CHARGES**

CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE: United States Attorney Tom Colantuono, Drug Enforcement Administration Special Agent in Charge of the Boston Field Division Mark R. Trouville, New Hampshire Deputy Attorney General Michael Delaney, New Hampshire Drug Task Force Chairman William Fenniman, New Hampshire State Police Colonel Frederick Booth, United States Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives Special Agent in Charge of the Boston Field Office William J. Hoover, and Belmont Police Chief Vinnie Baiocchetti, announced that numerous members of a Lakes Region-based cocaine ring have been sentenced to various terms of federal imprisonment. The lead defendant in the case, **Philip PUOPOLO**, 45, of Belmont, New Hampshire, was convicted on May 17, 2004, of conspiracy to distribute over 5 kilograms of cocaine and a quantity of methamphetamine, and of being a drug user in possession of firearms and ammunition. Puopolo faces sentencing on January 27, 2005 in U.S. District Court in Concord. Puopolo will also forfeit his Belmont residence and a 2000 custom-built motorcycle to authorities as part of his sentence.

PUOPOLO's conviction, and the convictions of 17 others, were the result of a two-year investigation conducted by the Drug Enforcement Administration, the New Hampshire Attorney General's Drug Task Force, the New Hampshire State Police, and the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, with assistance from the Belmont, New Hampshire Police Department. The investigation, which centered around the cocaine and methamphetamine trafficking activities of Philip PUOPOLO of Belmont, New Hampshire, and included a month-long wiretap of Puopolo's cellular telephone, effectively dismantled a cocaine trafficking

organization which had imported over a kilogram of cocaine per month into New Hampshire from a Massachusetts-based Colombian drug ring over the past several years. During the investigation, undercover investigators purchased multi-ounce quantities of cocaine from participants in the conspiracy, executed search warrants at locations in Belmont, Laconia and Gilmanton Iron Works, seized over thirty firearms including handguns, rifles, and shotguns, and seized and forfeited over \$125,000 in cash from locations in New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Florida, a 2000 custom-built motorcycle, and real estate in Belmont and Gilmanton Iron Works, New Hampshire, the equity in which is valued at over \$100,000.

The following individuals, most of whom were arrested in November, 2003, have been convicted and sentenced in United States District Court:

- **Juan MELGUIZO**, 38, of Chelsea, Massachusetts, a Colombian national and one of Puopolo's sources of supply for cocaine, was convicted on April 22, 2004, of conspiracy to distribute over 5 kilograms of cocaine. On July 28, 2004, he was sentenced to a 70-month (5 years, 10 months) term of imprisonment, followed by a 5-year period of supervised release, during which his behavior will be monitored by the U.S. Probation Department. After his release from prison, he will be deported to his native Colombia;
- **Narcizo ZARATE**, 31, of Revere, Massachusetts, a Colombian national and one of Puopolo's sources of supply for cocaine, was convicted on April 15, 2004, of conspiracy to distribute between ½ and 2 kilograms of cocaine. On August 30, 2004, he was sentenced to a 60-month (5-year) term of imprisonment, followed by a 4-year period of supervised release, during which his behavior will be monitored by the U.S. Probation Department. After his release from prison, he will be deported to his native Colombia;
- **Kennard LANG**, 55, of Laconia, New Hampshire, was convicted on May 18, 2004, of using a communications facility (telephone) to facilitate drug trafficking. On September 1, 2004, he was sentenced to a 48-month (4-year) term of imprisonment, followed by a 1-year period of supervised release, during which his behavior will be monitored by the U.S. Probation Department;
- **William MISHEL**, 53, of an unknown Massachusetts address, a source of cocaine supply for Puopolo, was convicted on June 29, 2004, of possession with intent to distribute cocaine. On November 18, 2004, he was sentenced to a 46-month term of imprisonment, followed by a 3-year period of supervised release, during which his behavior will be monitored by the U.S. Probation Department;
- **Darcy FOSS**, 35, of Saugus, Massachusetts, a source of cocaine supply for Puopolo, was convicted on March 18, 2004, of possession with intent to distribute cocaine. On June 17, 2004, she was sentenced to a 27-month term of

imprisonment, followed by a 6-year period of supervised release, during which her behavior will be monitored by the U.S. Probation Department;

- **Armando LOVOS**, 35, of Lynn, Massachusetts, a source of cocaine supply for Puopolo, was convicted on September 13, 2004, of conspiracy to distribute over 300 grams of cocaine. On December 20, 2004, he was sentenced to a 24-month term of imprisonment, which will be followed by deportation to his native Dominican Republic;
- **Brian JORDAN**, 46, of Center Harbor, New Hampshire, a cocaine customer who sometimes assisted Puopolo in transporting cocaine from Massachusetts into New Hampshire, was convicted on March 11, 2004, of possession with intent to distribute cocaine. On June 14, 2004, he was sentenced to a 24-month (2-year) term of imprisonment, followed by a 3-year period of supervised release, during which his behavior will be monitored by the U.S. Probation Department;
- **Peter VERRILL**, 27, of Laconia, New Hampshire, was convicted on March 18, 2004, of possession with intent to distribute between ½ and 2 kilos cocaine. On June 18, 2004, he was sentenced to a 27-month term of imprisonment, followed by a 3-year period of supervised release, during which his behavior will be monitored by the U.S. Probation Department;
- **Samuel VERRILL**, 37, of Meredith, New Hampshire, a cocaine customer who sometimes assisted Puopolo in transporting cocaine from Massachusetts into New Hampshire, was convicted on March 12, 2004, of possession with intent to distribute cocaine. On August 2, 2004, he was sentenced to a 12-month (1-year) term of imprisonment, followed by a 3-year period of supervised release, during which his behavior will be monitored by the U.S. Probation Department;
- **Joseph BAUMANN**, 36, of Gilmanton Iron Works, a methamphetamine and cocaine customer of Puopolo and a sometime cocaine supplier to Puopolo, was convicted on March 23, 2004 of possession with intent to distribute between ½ and 2 kilos of cocaine and possession of counterfeit instruments. On August 16, 2004, he was sentenced to a 12-month (1-year) term of imprisonment, followed by a 3- year period of supervised release, during which his behavior will be monitored by the U.S. Probation Department. BAUMANN also forfeited his residence located in Gilmanton Iron Works, New Hampshire;
- **Gordon POTTER, Sr.**, 47, of Meredith, New Hampshire, was convicted on March 18, 2004, of attempted possession with intent to distribute one ounce (28 grams) of cocaine. On May 20, 2004, he was sentenced to a 10-month term of imprisonment, followed by a 3-year period of supervised release, during which his behavior will be monitored by the U.S. Probation Department;

- **Scott ALATI**, 39, of Franklin, New Hampshire, was convicted on April 5, 2004, of possession with intent to distribute between ½ and 2 kilos cocaine. On November 1, 2004, he was sentenced to a 24-month term of imprisonment, followed by a 3-year period of supervised release, during which his behavior will be monitored by the U.S. Probation Department;
- **Martha VIOLETTE**, 29, of Laconia, New Hampshire, a cocaine customer of and methamphetamine source of supply to Puopolo, was convicted on March 18, 2004, of possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine and cocaine. On November 15, 2004, she was sentenced to an 18-month term of imprisonment, followed by a 3-year period of supervised release, during which her behavior will be monitored by the U.S. Probation Department;
- **Kathleen GILLIGAN**, 32, of Gilmanton Iron Works, New Hampshire, was convicted on March 16, 2004, of using a communications facility (telephone) to facilitate drug trafficking. On June 16, 2004, she was sentenced to a 3-year term of probation, during which her behavior will be monitored by the U.S. Probation Department;
- **William WALKER**, 46, of Laconia, New Hampshire, was convicted on March 18, 2004, of using a communications facility (telephone) to facilitate drug trafficking. On June 16, 2004, he was sentenced to a 6-month term of home confinement, followed by a 3-year period of probation, during which his behavior will be monitored by the U.S. Probation Department, and fined \$1,000;
- **Philip WOLFSON**, 42, of Plymouth, New Hampshire, was convicted on March 16, 2004, of being a drug user in possession of a firearm. On July 26, 2004, he was sentenced to a 28-day term of imprisonment, followed by a 3-year period of supervised release, during which his behavior will be monitored by the U.S. Probation Department, and fined \$3,000;
- **George ARCHAMBAULT**, 45, of Center Harbor, New Hampshire, was convicted on March 4, 2004, of being a drug user in possession of a firearm. On June 1, 2004, he was sentenced to a 2-year term of probation, during which he will be subject to behavioral conditions under the supervision of the U.S. Department of Probation, and fined \$500;
- **Gregory POTTER**, 22, of Meredith, New Hampshire, was convicted on February 20, 2004, of attempted simple possession of cocaine, a misdemeanor. He was detained for over four months without bail since he violated the conditions of his release on bail on January 15, 2004. On May 21, 2004, he was sentenced to 3 years probation, during which he will be subject to behavioral conditions under the supervision of the U.S. Department of Probation.

U.S. Attorney Colantuono stated: “This case exemplifies this Office’s commitment to the New England Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force, and the aggressive prosecution of crimes related to all forms of illegal drug trafficking, and the transportation of cocaine into New Hampshire across the Massachusetts border in particular. The cooperative efforts of the DEA, ATF, N.H. Attorney General's Drug Task Force, and the N.H. State Police, coordinated and funded in this case by the OCDETF program, have made the Lakes Region a safer place to live. My Office will continue to participate in the OCDETF program, seeking to reduce the drug supply in the State of New Hampshire. ”

The prosecution is being handled by Assistant United States Attorneys Joseph N. Laplante, the Lead Attorney for the District of New Hampshire in the New England Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (“New England OCDETF”) and Rob Rabuck of the Civil Division’s Asset Forfeiture Section.

#